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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Optimizing the international effort to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/14 on the strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. In the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a report containing a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the resolution.

The report chronicles the activities undertaken by the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations to promote recovery from the Chernobyl disaster, including participation in commemorations of the twentieth anniversary of the accident. It concludes that the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system are united in pursuing a development approach to the Chernobyl legacy and emphasizes the continuing need for community development efforts and for the provision of accurate information to the affected populations.

* The submission of the present report was delayed to allow sufficient time for its review and approval by the relevant departments.

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I. General situation

1. In 2006, the United Nations marked an important milestone: the twentieth anniversary of the devastating 1986 accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. The anniversary provided an opportunity not only to commemorate the human suffering caused by the Chernobyl disaster but also to take stock of the efforts undertaken by the international community over the past two decades to help the three countries most affected by the accident, namely, Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, to mitigate its impact.

2. The stocktaking showed that many negative consequences of the accident persist today. Radioactive iodine released during the accident has caused elevated levels of thyroid cancer among those who were children at the time of the accident. Many of the hundreds of thousands of people who were displaced from their native towns after the accident still face diminished opportunities. The region's demographic structure remains skewed, as younger people and skilled workers shun rural villages for better opportunities elsewhere. Perhaps most importantly, millions of people in the vast territories designated as contaminated by Chernobyl remain traumatized by lingering fears about their health.

3. At the same time, however, the anniversary provided grounds for optimism. First, Governments, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and major donors were unanimous in advocating a development approach to the Chernobyl challenge. The approach, first proposed in the 2002 report, entitled "The human consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident: a strategy for recovery", calls for a shift from emergency humanitarian aid to long-term development assistance aimed at creating new economic opportunities, restoring community self-sufficiency and promoting a return to normalcy among affected populations. The anniversary showed a strong consensus behind that approach.

4. Second, the findings of the Chernobyl Forum, released in 2005 and widely discussed during the twentieth anniversary events, provided a reassuring message about the impact on health and the environment of radiation from the accident. The central finding, namely, that most people living in Chernobyl-affected regions need not live in fear of serious health consequences from the accident, offered the hope that providing better information to the public could ease pervasive fears arising from myths and misconceptions about radiation. While recognizing the significant progress made in Government and international rehabilitation efforts, the findings also highlighted the region's need for improved social and economic opportunities.

5. Third, significant progress was reported in the long-running effort to transform the damaged Chernobyl reactor into a stable and environmentally safe site (see paras. 54-58, below).

6. As these promising steps suggest, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system now share a common approach and a clear set of priorities on Chernobyl. The consensus provides a reliable foundation for the coordination that is crucial to maximizing the limited funds available for recovery efforts. A consistent United Nations systemwide strategy is also important in providing helpful support to the region's Governments as they grapple with the legacy of the accident (for the reports of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine describing Government recovery efforts, see annexes I-III). To maximize limited resources, avoid duplication of effort and build on recognized agency mandates and competencies, consideration

should be given to preparing a United Nations action plan for Chernobyl recovery up to the year 2016, which marks the third decade after the accident.

II. Coordination of the work of the United Nations on Chernobyl

7. In line with the new development strategy, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2004 assumed responsibility from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for coordination of Chernobyl efforts across the United Nations system. The Secretary-General designated the Administrator of UNDP as the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl.

8. In 2005, UNDP established the Office of Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, situated in the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, to manage the coordination responsibilities. Funding for the Office reflects the designation of Chernobyl as a priority area in the UNDP regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States for the period from 2006 to 2010.

9. In 2006, the final elements of the transfer of responsibility from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to UNDP were completed. The United Nations Development Programme took over management of the United Nations Chernobyl website, Chernobyl files and archives and the United Nations Chernobyl Trust Fund.

10. In an effort to share information and facilitate better coordination, UNDP organized meetings of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl on 13 January 2006 and 24 January 2007. More than 50 people participated via videoconference from eight locations. The Administrator of UNDP chaired the meeting in 2006 and the Associate Administrator chaired it in 2007. Membership of the Inter-Agency Task Force was expanded to include, as observers, organizations from outside the United Nations system, including the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

11. The Quadripartite Coordination Committee, a body that brings together the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl and the ministries responsible for Chernobyl in the three most affected countries, was also revived, with a meeting in Minsk on 19 April 2006. Given that the previous meeting of the Committee had been held in 1999, the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl modified the composition of the Committee to include representatives of the United Nations Coordinator and his Deputy; officials of the emergencies ministries of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine; and the United Nations resident coordinators in the three countries.

III. Ongoing United Nations assistance efforts

12. In each of the three most affected countries, United Nations country teams are pursuing Chernobyl programmes based on the development approach and the recommendations of the Chernobyl Forum. Activities fall into eight main categories:

(a) community-based development; (b) policy advice; (c) infrastructure; (d) health; (e) radiation mitigation and standard setting; (f) reactor safety and nuclear waste management; (g) emergency preparedness; and (h) environmental security.

Community-based development

13. In Ukraine, the UNDP Chernobyl recovery and development programme works in the country's four most affected oblasts (Chernihivska, Kyivska, Rivnenska and Zhytomyrska) to create better living conditions and promote sustainable human development. The programme's activities include policy advice and institutional support, at both the national and local levels, as well as self-governance and community development.

14. So far, the Chernobyl recovery and development programme has helped to create 256 community organizations in 174 affected villages. Public-private partnerships have been fostered and financial support secured to support 169 community-based recovery and development projects valued at a total of $3.3 million. Over 200,000 people have benefited directly from the projects, which typically involve improving local water supplies, rehabilitating schools and medical service centres, creating youth centres and providing access to computer and Internet technology. Impressively, resources mobilized locally cover 70 per cent of total project costs.

15. Under a project launched in 2005, the United Nations Volunteers has helped to strengthen the participatory community development component of the Chernobyl recovery and development programme. Seven national and three international United Nations Volunteers have participated so far.

16. The approach of the Chernobyl recovery and development programme has already begun to change attitudes and inspire greater self-reliance at the community level. It has also won new support from donors for Chernobyl recovery efforts. As of mid-2007, the programme had raised a total of nearly $4 million.

17. The UNDP community-based approach includes efforts to support small businesses and promote investment. In 2005, UNDP launched the Chernobyl Economic Development Forum in Ukraine as a platform for preparing a sustainable development strategy for the affected territories and attracting investments into the region. Local economic development agencies were established in five affected districts. The agencies work closely with the private sector and local authorities to promote small and medium-sized firms, an investment-friendly business environment and public-private initiatives.

18. Similarly, in the Russian Federation, UNDP has helped to establish a centre for local economic development in the Bryansk oblast. The centre promotes the development of small businesses and administers a microcredit fund for rural households, which has increased its funding threefold since the beginning of 2006 and doubled the number of beneficiaries. In the future, the Bryansk experience will be replicated in other Chernobyl-affected areas (Kaluga, Orel and Tula). The United Nations Development Programme also helps the Bryansk local government authorities attract investments and advise local firms on preparing proposals for investors.

19. In Belarus, United Nations assistance is mainly channelled through the mechanisms of the Cooperation for Rehabilitation programme. Currently, the CORE

programme's Declaration has 34 signatories, including several United Nations bodies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the European Commission, representatives of a number of European countries, international non-governmental organizations, the four participating districts (Bragin, Chechersk, Slavgorod and Stolin) and three regional governments (Brest, Gomel and Mogilev).

20. The CORE programme focuses on four priority areas: health care and surveillance; economic and social development; culture and education of children and youth and the preservation of the memory of the Chernobyl disaster; and radiological quality (developing a system aimed at enabling local residents to monitor their own surroundings). The United Nations Development Programme, through a support project executed in partnership with the Chernobyl Department under the Ministry of Emergencies of Belarus and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, plays a key role in implementing the programme. It also administers donor resources for several CORE projects. To date, the CORE programme has generated 116 projects (28 thematic projects and 88 small-scale initiatives) and raised €3.4 million of the total €8 million required.

21. The UNDP Belarus office has also developed a $1.5 million project proposal on enhancing human security in the Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus, which has received favourable consideration from the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security funded by the Government of Japan. The proposal takes an integrated approach to following up Chernobyl Forum recommendations by addressing the issues of safe agricultural production by small private farms, promoting the rebuilding of community structures, advocating healthy lifestyles and improving access to and the quality of primary health-care services, while specifically targeting high-risk populations and by providing practical information and advice to various community groups on living in conditions of continuous low-dose radiation exposure.

22. The UNDP Belarus office is working to pilot an area-based development methodology in three Chernobyl-affected districts that are currently not covered by the CORE programme. The main goal is to raise the profile of local communities, build their developmental capacity and encourage cross-border cooperation in the Chernobyl-affected subregion. The project envisions the involvement of the United Nations Volunteers in community work.

23. The European Union has earmarked €2.8 million for a project aimed at improving living conditions in Chernobyl-affected areas in Belarus.

Policy advice

24. The UNDP Ukraine office provides ongoing advisory support to the Government and is assisting in the drafting of development-oriented strategies for Chernobyl. In 2006, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a new national programme on Chernobyl that incorporated key recovery-oriented recommendations. In the future, UNDP will help to develop a legal framework for revisiting the zoning status of affected territories in Ukraine. The misalignment of zoning boundaries with current radiation levels inhibits the revival of economic activity in some areas where it would otherwise be possible.

25. In the Russian Federation, UNDP helps to promote policy dialogue among national, regional and local stakeholders to promote a new vision of socio-economic recovery.

Subregional cooperation

26. The UNDP Office of Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl has worked to enhance subregional cooperation, in particular among UNDP Chernobyl teams in the field. Subregional working groups have been created to share ideas and build synergies in three priority areas: information provision, policy change and community development. A subregional conference of all UNDP Chernobyl teams was held from 16 to 18 January 2007 in Ukraine.

27. Cross-border cooperation on Chernobyl was the topic of a UNDP presentation delivered at an international conference on local approaches to development, which was co-organized by UNDP and the European association of regions in Marseille, France, in March 2007. The presentation focused on the ongoing work of UNDP to build partnerships between Polish and Ukrainian local authorities aimed at promoting local self-governance in the Chernobyl-affected areas of Ukraine.

Infrastructure

28. The World Bank has focused its Chernobyl recovery activities on Belarus. Building on its 2002 study of the social and economic impact of the accident, the World Bank has designed a project that aims to provide cleaner and more energy-efficient heating systems through the installation of new equipment and better insulation in schools, hospitals and orphanages in Chernobyl-affected areas. In addition, the project will replace inefficient communal boilers and dilapidated heat distribution systems. Investments in residential gas connections will also provide clean and improved space heating to households that currently burn contaminated wood or peat inside their homes. The $50 million project was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors on 18 April 2006.

Health

29. As exemplified by the work of the Chernobyl Forum, United Nations bodies have focused on clarifying information on the health impact of the 1986 accident and on disseminating that information to affected communities and the international media. This is not an easy task, owing both to pervasive myths and misconceptions about radiation and to the high rates of disease in the region, which are often mistakenly attributed to the accident.

30. Evidence presented by the scientific community, including within the Chernobyl Forum and by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, has been broadly reassuring about the impact of radiation. That message has helped to clarify the health agenda for organizations active in Chernobyl recovery efforts. In addition to the monitoring and treatment of high-risk groups (mainly liquidators), the agenda includes efforts to detect and treat thyroid cancer among those who were exposed as children in 1986 and to disseminate accurate and clear information on the impact of radiation as a way of relieving the stress, fear and anxiety experienced by many area residents. Owing to the relatively narrow set of public health concerns directly attributable to the accident, the agenda

also encompasses such broader health issues as the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the fight against iodine deficiency.

31. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation is the body specifically mandated by the General Assembly to assess scientifically exposure to sources of ionizing radiation and the health and environmental effects of that radiation. The Committee participated in the Chernobyl Forum, with regard to reviewing the health effects of radiation from the accident. In its report to the Assembly at the Assembly's sixty-first session,[1] the Committee reiterated that the findings of the Forum had confirmed the scientific conclusions on health consequences reached by the Committee in its report to the Assembly at the Assembly's fifty-fifth session,[2] namely, that the majority of the population faced no serious health consequences due to radiation or radionuclides released during the Chernobyl accident.

32. In its report, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation noted that, for the general population, the main adverse health consequence had been a dramatic increase in the incidence of thyroid cancer among people who had received high radioactive iodine doses as children in 1986.

33. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation observed that it was often difficult for the public and the media to appreciate that the radiation risks, while serious for some exposed groups, were, for the general population, not as significant from a radiological health point of view as they were often represented to be. Uninformed reporting of postulated numbers of projected exposure-related deaths as a result of the accident, especially reporting before and at the time of the twentieth anniversary of the accident in April 2006, had created confusion among the public. With the exception of the early deaths among emergency workers, which were clinically attributable to acute radiation syndrome, and the small proportion of cases of thyroid cancer (which could be attributed on epidemiological grounds to radiation exposure) that were fatal, the Committee found that it was not possible to attribute any specific death to the late effects of exposure to radiation as a result of the accident.

34. In collaboration with scientists from the three most affected countries, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation is continuing to provide the scientific basis for better understanding of the radiation health effects of the accident. The next significant Committee report on the subject, which was originally scheduled for 2006, is now slated for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. It will cover findings on the impact of radiation that have been scientifically verified since the publication of the Committee's landmark 2000 report. In particular, the new report will clarify further the assessment of potential harm resulting from chronic low-level exposures among large populations and the attributability of health effects.

35. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been instrumental in publicizing the health findings of the Chernobyl Forum. In 2006, it published *Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident and Special Health-Care Programmes*, a report that critically reviews the scientific evidence accumulated over 20 years and presents the international consensus on the current knowledge available about Chernobyl health

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/61/46).

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/55/46).

effects. The report was prepared by the Expert Group "Health" convened by WHO within the Chernobyl Forum. It contains recommendations for the national health authorities of the three most affected States concerning health-care programmes and medical monitoring as well as recommendations for future research and follow-up studies. The report is now being translated into the other official languages of the United Nations. A WHO fact sheet conveying the report's key messages in simple, non-technical language is available in English, French and Russian.

36. The World Health Organization has also analysed the lessons learned from the public health measures adopted in the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, with a view to strengthening radiation emergency response systems. Special attention has been paid to analysing medical management results and the follow-up of people exposed to Chernobyl radiation, including some 5,000 thyroid cancer patients who were exposed to radioactive iodine at a young age. The WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer is currently conducting further research on the health effects of the Chernobyl accident.

37. Thyroid cancer detection is the chief concern of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Together with the national Red Cross Societies of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the International Federation continues to implement its long-term Chernobyl humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programme, providing health screening and psychological support to the affected population. The programme's goal is to identify thyroid gland cancer and other thyroid pathologies in remote villages where State health authorities have little capacity and provide referrals for further treatment.

38. The services of the Chernobyl humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programme are rendered by six mobile diagnostic laboratories in the Brest, Gomel and Mogilev regions of Belarus; the Rivne and Zhytomyr regions of Ukraine; and the Bryansk region of the Russian Federation. The laboratories focus on high-risk groups and screen about 90,000 persons annually. Screenings in the period from 2004 to 2006 detected more than 200 thyroid cancer cases each year. The diagnostic capability and quality of the examinations provided by the laboratories have improved as a result of new, sophisticated equipment, staff training and the introduction of modern screening techniques. Long-term sustainability will be ensured by transferring programme responsibilities to national Red Cross Societies and gradually integrating the activities of the Chernobyl humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programme into national health-care systems.

39. The increase in thyroid cancers caused by the accident has prompted attention to be focused on the iodine deficiency that is endemic in the region. Research has suggested that iodine deficiency worsened the impact of Chernobyl radiation by hastening the uptake of radioactive iodine by the thyroid. Iodine deficiency is a serious health problem in its own right, causing developmental delays in children and, in severe cases, mental retardation. Moreover, it is easily and affordably treatable through the consumption of iodized salt.

40. Given that only 30 per cent of households in the Russian Federation and Ukraine use iodized salt, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has made achieving universal salt iodization a priority. Introduction of universal salt iodization legislation in all three affected countries was a centrepiece of UNICEF advocacy efforts in 2006. The United Nations Children's Fund supported the production of the film, *Chernobyl: the Zone of Nonsense*, which highlights the issue

of iodine deficiency disorders. The film was shown at a press conference during the twentieth anniversary and broadcast by three national television stations.

41. In Belarus, a universal salt iodization amendment to the national law on food quality and safety was included in the parliamentary plan for 2007 legislation. Technical assistance from UNICEF has helped to enhance national capacities for monitoring iodized salt quality and availability in retail trade and its use in food processing and public catering. In line with a Belarus Council of Ministers resolution, monitoring is conducted quarterly. The share of iodized salt in retail trade has doubled in five years, from 35.5 per cent in 2001 to 72 per cent in 2006.

42. In Ukraine, UNICEF is assisting the Government in establishing an efficient system for the prevention of iodine deficiency diseases. A draft law on universal salt iodization was prepared and supported by the First Lady of Ukraine, leading scientists, the salt industry, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport, and non-governmental organization representatives. A project on advocacy and communication in support of universal salt iodization in Ukraine will help to investigate and disseminate information on iodine nutrition and the iodine deficiency status of children and women in Chernobyl-affected regions.

43. Promoting healthy lifestyles is another priority activity of international assistance. That activity often involves both providing information on living safely in conditions of low-dose radiation and promoting healthy choices to reduce the incidence of widespread ailments (such as cardiovascular disease) and harmful behaviours (such as smoking and alcohol abuse) that are prevalent both within and outside of Chernobyl-affected regions.

44. In Belarus, the United States Agency for International Development is supporting a two-year, $500,000 joint project with UNDP on family health. The project will establish a sustainable framework and mechanisms for the radio-ecological education of health-care professionals, women of reproductive age, pregnant women and nursing mothers, and secondary schoolteachers and schoolchildren in the Chernobyl-affected regions of Belarus. The United Nations Development Programme started implementing the initiative in July 2007.

45. One of the priorities of UNICEF is the promotion of healthy lifestyle education for children and parents, as well as for teachers and other professionals. The aim is to raise awareness about the importance of adopting life skills and healthy behaviour to reduce the impact of environmental risks, to strengthen the health and development of children and adolescents living in contaminated areas and to train those children and adolescents to make informed choices.

46. The United Nations Children's Fund has implemented a four-year project on life skills and healthy lifestyle education in the Brest region of Belarus, in cooperation with local authorities, the Brest regional centre of hygiene, epidemiology and public health and the SAARC Documentation Centre. The project has prepared and printed educational programmes, manuals for children in the first through fourth grades and methodological materials for teachers on healthy lifestyles, radiation safety and life skills in affected areas in 10 pilot schools of the Brest region. In addition, 11 newly created information resource centres in the Luninets district provide free access to advocacy and communication materials on healthy lifestyles and Chernobyl-related issues to a large audience of schoolchildren, teachers, parents, health workers and community members.

47. Chernobyl areas are often given priority in United Nations system efforts to address broader issues in health and education. As part of a larger effort to improve the health-care system nationwide, UNICEF has supported the establishment of a "youth friendly clinic" in Chernihiv, the centre of the most affected oblast in Ukraine. The clinic provides medical, social and psychological assistance specifically to young people. Its 30 professionals trained in youth-friendly service techniques will serve some 1,000 adolescents per year.

48. Similarly, UNICEF has supported non-governmental organization community development projects in implementing an early socialization model in six Chernobyl-affected areas of Belarus. The early socialization model was presented during regional and national conferences as a best practice for Belarus communities and is available for replication in other regions. In 2006 two new models of preschool education were opened in five affected districts. In addition, more than 100 social workers, medical professionals and teachers have received training in new approaches to working with families to prevent child abandonment.

Radiation mitigation and standard setting

49. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a long-standing regional project in all of the three most affected countries to provide radiological support for the rehabilitation of Chernobyl-affected areas. The project aims to enhance the radiation safety of the population and promote socio-economic recovery by providing necessary scientific, methodological and information support through the development of recommendations on the harmonization of national concepts for the rehabilitation of Chernobyl-affected areas and the radiation protection of the public; the improvement of a long-term unified strategy of radiological monitoring; technical support for decision-making on the management of contaminated agricultural territories; and information dissemination, in part by improving and creating electronic resources for the public.

50. At the national level, IAEA provides assistance to Belarus for the remediation of affected territories through the use of agricultural technologies that reduce the transfer of caesium-137 to foodstuffs. Another project aims to improve the unified States system for surveying and registering exposure doses from various sources of ionizing radiation. In addition, IAEA continues to provide advice on radiation-related matters to the World Bank's energy efficiency project in Belarus (see para. 28, above).

51. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) works closely with IAEA to ensure adequate preparedness for and response to nuclear emergencies. The Joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is responsible for addressing nuclear or radiological contamination affecting food and agriculture. Practical arrangements for notification, information exchange and provision of technical support in the case of nuclear or radiological emergencies and their aftermath are specifically described in FAO/IAEA cooperative arrangements.

52. In that regard, the Joint Division continues to enhance its activities related to potential future nuclear and radiological events affecting food and agriculture. Those efforts have included the recent adoption of codex guideline levels for radionuclides in foods contaminated following a nuclear or radiological emergency for use in international trade, under the auspices of the Joint FAO/WHO Codex

Alimentarius Commission. The guideline levels apply to radionuclides contained in foods that are destined for human consumption and traded internationally, and which have been contaminated following a nuclear or radiological emergency.

Reactor safety and nuclear waste management

53. The Chernobyl accident highlighted the importance of nuclear safety and spurred large-scale cooperation. The international community has joined with IAEA to make substantial financial and technical contributions to improve safety at the Chernobyl site and many other nuclear sites across the region. Safety measures have been implemented to prevent such a catastrophe from happening again. The effort is ongoing.

54. Concerns about the safety of the Chernobyl sarcophagus have yielded a firm international resolve to support Ukraine in building a new shelter to contain the damaged reactor and provide for the environmentally sound collection and storage of nuclear waste. The Chernobyl Shelter Fund, managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, was established in 1997 to transform unit 4, which was destroyed in the accident, into a stable and environmentally safe state. Twenty-nine countries, led by the Group of Eight countries and the European Commission, have pledged more than €800 million to implement the programme.

55. The first phase involved the stabilization of the fragile existing structure surrounding the damaged reactor. All infrastructure and preparatory projects designed to achieve that goal, as well as extensive engineering and design activities, were completed by the end of 2006. Measures to reduce the risk of collapse were completed in December 2006, with the construction of external structures stabilizing the western wall and the roof of the existing shelter. This is the largest international project to be completed at the site to date and it was finished largely within budget and on schedule.

56. The second and more costly phase of the plan involves the detailed design and construction of a "new safe confinement", an arch-shaped structure with a height of 100 metres and a span of 250 metres, which will be assembled in a safe area near the site and will eventually slide on rails over the top of the old sarcophagus. Once completed, the new confinement will safely contain the radioactive inventory of the old shelter, prevent the intrusion of water and snow and provide equipment for the eventual dismantling of the destroyed reactor and the old shelter. The tender process took longer than expected, but a contract for the new safe confinement was signed in September 2007.

57. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development also manages the Nuclear Safety Account, which was created in 1993 to address urgent safety flaws in Soviet-era reactors. In Ukraine, the Nuclear Safety Account is currently financing two facilities needed in the decommissioning of units 1, 2 and 3 at the Chernobyl site, including an interim storage facility for spent nuclear fuel and a treatment facility for liquid radioactive waste. A contract for those projects was also signed in September 2007.

58. The International Atomic Energy Agency is assisting Ukraine in the decommissioning of units 1, 2 and 3 and the management of radioactive waste from unit 4 and within the Chernobyl exclusion zone. The main objective is to help the Government develop an integrated approach to planning, management and

implementation of the decommissioning. Advice is being provided on the structure and content of a decommissioning plan, on the revision of the integrated radioactive waste management programme at the Chernobyl power plant site, and on a series of State programmes on decommissioning and on the conversion of the shelter. Ukraine plans to continue the project until 2011.

59. In line with Chernobyl Forum recommendations, IAEA has proposed an integrated approach to radioactive waste management, characterization of radioactive material and physical protection. A project focused on a comprehensive safety assessment of radioactive waste in Ukraine was initiated in 2006. The project has three main components: the development of a national waste classification mechanism; the development of a national logistics system linking waste types to disposal options; and the development and testing of capacity in safety assessment for waste disposal facilities.

Emergency preparedness

60. The Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has continued to address issues arising from the Chernobyl accident. The Agency's 28 member countries are committed to improving the public health of affected populations and to learning from the experience so as to be better prepared for dealing with large-scale, long-term contamination situations of any origin. The Agency has focused on two main areas: learning how better to bring radiological protection science to the service of local decision-making; and improving nuclear emergency preparedness and management in general.

61. Since the publication of its 2006 report entitled *Stakeholders and Radiological Protection: Lessons from Chernobyl 20 Years After*, the Nuclear Energy Agency has continued to work on post-accident governance by exploring the impact that stakeholder involvement at the local level has had on regulatory organizational structures and processes, and is contributing to the development of a code of conduct for stakeholder involvement for use by radiological protection professionals.

62. The Nuclear Energy Agency has also continued its efforts to improve preparedness and management capabilities, both nationally and internationally. The latest of its international nuclear emergency exercises, INEX 3, held in 2006, focused on post-emergency consequence management. Follow-up to the exercise will include work on improving decision-making in post-emergency recovery and a workshop in 2008 to exchange experience in the involvement of stakeholders in emergency planning and in post-accident and rehabilitation activities.

Environmental security

63. The European inter-agency Environment and Security Initiative helps European countries to identify and address situations where environmental problems may aggravate inter-State or intra-State tensions, or where environmental cooperation can help to build bridges between parties to conflicts and tensions. Attention is also being paid to situations where security policies and measures may have environmental consequences.

64. The Initiative's assessment of environment and security issues in Eastern Europe began in 2005. Among other national and regional concerns, Chernobyl

emerged as a unique case of major cross-border and local impact with not yet fully resolved environmental consequences. The Initiative noted the lack of detailed knowledge about radiological conditions in the near-border southern part of Belarus, now administered as the Polessie State Radiation and Ecological Reserve. To help Belarus obtain comprehensive information about the radioactive contamination of the area and the radio-ecological consequences of its movement across borders, the Initiative-facilitated project that is being developed in the framework of the science for peace and security programme of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The project is expected to be launched in late 2007 or early 2008.

65. In 2007, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a five-year project involving the three most affected countries, which aimed at analysing the impact of chronic radiation on the flora and fauna and human inhabitants of areas excluded from economic activity after the accident.

IV. Advocacy, information and public awareness

Anniversary commemorations

66. The twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident offered an ideal opportunity to remind the world of the problems that the affected region continues to face, as well as to promote potential solutions. Organizations and bodies of the United Nations system worked closely with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to organize high-profile anniversary commemorations, both in the region's capitals and at United Nations Headquarters.

67. An international conference on the theme "Twenty years after Chernobyl: strategy for recovery and sustainable development of the affected regions" was held in Minsk and Gomel, Belarus, from 19 to 21 April 2006. Speakers from the United Nations system included the UNDP Associate Administrator, the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, the IAEA Deputy Director General and the Secretary-General. of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also spoke.

68. A second international conference on the theme "Twenty years after the Chernobyl accident: future outlook", was held in Kyiv from 24 to 26 April 2006. The conference was opened by the President of Ukraine and the UNDP Regional Director (speaking on behalf of the UNDP Administrator). Other speakers included the Director-General of UNESCO and the Deputy Director General of IAEA. The United Nations Children's Fund and the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies participated in a humanitarian forum on rebirth, renewal and human development, organized by the First Lady of Ukraine. The President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies also addressed the Ukrainian parliamentary session devoted to the anniversary.

69. The Russian Federation's commemoration took the form of an international exhibition and seminar, on the theme "Chernobyl: ecology, the human being and health", held in Moscow from 5 to 8 December 2006.

70. On 28 April 2006, the General Assembly held a special commemorative meeting to mark the twentieth anniversary. Addressing the Assembly in his capacity

as United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, the Administrator of UNDP emphasized the importance of the transition from relief to development. The Executive Director of UNICEF addressed the alarming concern about iodine deficiency. These speakers were followed by representatives of the three most affected countries, by the chairs of the regional group and by representatives of countries particularly active in recovery efforts. A commemorative photo exhibition organized by the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of the three most affected countries was inaugurated after the session.

71. Such official ceremonies were matched by other, less formal events and activities, including "Faces of Chernobyl", a project for children from Chernobyl-affected families. Within the framework of the project, UNICEF organized a workshop to provide young people from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine with a chance to express their views on the Chernobyl disaster through photography. They visited Chernobyl-affected areas and prepared a twentieth anniversary commemorative photo exhibition in Kyiv, Minsk and Moscow. With the assistance of the Belarus Ministry of Emergencies, the exhibition was shown in Latvia, the Russian Federation and Switzerland as an advocacy and fund-raising tool.

72. These events, with countless other conferences and commemorations organized to mark the twentieth anniversary, achieved high visibility for Chernobyl. Media interest was keen and international coverage intense. Participation at the highest level by a wide range of organizations and bodies of the United Nations system helped to convey a firm sense of international commitment to solving the problems associated with Chernobyl. Moreover, United Nations system representatives spoke with a single voice, together with Governments, in advocating the need for a development approach to addressing the Chernobyl legacy. The consensus infused the anniversary with a shared sense of the way forward.

73. The findings of the Chernobyl Forum featured prominently in anniversary coverage. Thousands of copies of the Forum's report on Chernobyl's legacy, a concise summary of the findings presented in a format agreed by the Governments of the three most affected countries, were printed in English and Russian and distributed in time for the anniversary. The discussion on the findings was not uncritical, and scattered alarmist press reports highlighted the depth of popular misconceptions about Chernobyl. However, the Forum's reassuring message on the impact of the accident on health and the environment received a wide airing and helped to instil scientific sobriety in anniversary coverage.

Information dissemination

74. In its resolution 60/14 on Chernobyl, the General Assembly called for the dissemination of the findings of the Forum, including in the form of practical messages on healthy and productive lifestyles, to the populations affected by the accident in order to empower them to maximize social and economic recovery and sustainable development in all its aspects. The International Chernobyl Research and Information Network was identified in the resolution as the vehicle for disseminating such information. The Network aims to bring accurate, digestible and useful information to Chernobyl-affected communities through trustworthy local

sources. The information needs in the three countries have been assessed under the Network, but new fundings are needed to address those needs effectively.

75. Progress has been made. Working together with IAEA, WHO and UNICEF, the Office of United Nations Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl at UNDP has prepared a $2.5 million inter-agency proposal for submission to the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. A concept note was approved early in 2007 and UNDP is working to formulate a full project proposal. Full-fledged Network activities are expected to begin by 2008.

76. Projects in the field are already building a foundation for future Network efforts. The UNDP country team in Belarus strives to ensure that the population's information needs are taken into account and addressed in all project activities implemented in Chernobyl-affected territories. The UNDP country team in Ukraine has established a network for information provision to affected communities. In partnership with leading academic institutions, over 20 titles of Chernobyl-related learning and information materials targeted to specific groups have been produced for dissemination through a network of teachers and medical workers. A similar network of district information centres is being established in the Russian Federation.

77. As part of the Network, UNICEF has already begun preparations for a special edition of *Facts for Life*. The aim of the publication is to help overcome widespread stress, depression and victim's syndrome among people in the affected regions and to assist mothers, children and young people to cope with environmental, social and health risks.

Goodwill Ambassador

78. Continued visibility for an upbeat, forward-looking message on Chernobyl has been assured through the appointment on 14 February 2007 of top-ranked Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova as a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador. The issue has particular relevance for Ms. Sharapova because her family has roots in Gomel, Belarus. Ms. Sharapova aims to use her UNDP role to convey a message of self-reliance and responsible choices, in particular to young people in Chernobyl-affected regions. She has already drawn considerable media attention to the region's needs by discussing her UNDP affiliation in dozens of interviews with journalists.

79. Ms. Sharapova has donated $100,000 to youth-oriented UNDP projects in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. These projects aim to improve computer access, promote ecological awareness, restore sports facilities and make a hospital more child friendly. Ms. Sharapova plans to visit UNDP project sites in mid-2008.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

80. The United Nations system and the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have recognized that, after two decades, a return to normal life is a realistic prospect for most people living in Chernobyl-affected regions. To make that aim a reality, what the areas will most need is sustainable social and economic development: new jobs, fresh investment and the restoration of a sense of community self-reliance.

81. While needs specific to Chernobyl remain, and research into the health and environmental impact of the accident should continue, the main challenges facing the three countries are those in the mainstream of the United Nations development mission, as articulated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. This is encouraging news, because it means that Governments, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and donors can apply development tools and methods that have delivered results elsewhere in the world. The strong economic growth experienced by all three countries is also promising, as it provides a powerful engine for reducing poverty and creating opportunity. Sustaining growth nationwide will benefit Chernobyl-affected areas.

82. This is not to say that Chernobyl-affected communities do not need special attention. Community-based development efforts (such as those pursued by the Chernobyl recovery and development programme in Ukraine) show great promise, both in addressing small-scale infrastructure needs and in restoring a sense of shared purpose, initiative and self-confidence to those communities still suffering from passivity and hopelessness two decades after the Chernobyl accident. Such community-development projects should be expanded as widely as possible and include the promotion of small businesses and of new investment as an integral component.

83. Similarly, providing scientifically sound information to Chernobyl-affected communities in accessible, non-technical language should be a top priority. Accurate information on the impact of radiation, drawing on the reassuring findings of the Chernobyl Forum, can go a long way towards easing the fear, confusion and anxiety that plague many residents. Together with that information, advice on healthy lifestyles should be widely disseminated as a means of addressing the causes of many ailments mistakenly blamed on the Chernobyl accident.

84. Coordination among the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system should build on the sturdy consensus supporting the development approach and the findings of the Chernobyl Forum. Subregional cooperation should be encouraged to share best practices across borders.

85. The proposal to designate the third decade after Chernobyl as the decade of sustainable development of the affected regions is an idea worth consideration. The proposal was put forward by Belarus during the twentieth anniversary ceremonies and submitted for consideration to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl in January 2007. The designation could help to focus assistance efforts on the goal of a return to normal life for the affected communities and provide a realistic time frame in which the aim could be achieved.

86. Such a designation would require a practical framework. With this in mind, the Office of Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl has proposed to coordinate the drafting of a United Nations action plan for Chernobyl recovery up to the year 2016. A concise, agreed outline of the activities planned by the United Nations system could help maximize limited resources, avoid duplication of effort and build on recognized system mandates and competencies. The shared goal should be to ensure that by 2016, which marks the third decade after the Chernobyl accident, the area fully overcomes the stigma it now suffers, communities take full control of their lives and normalcy becomes a realistic prospect.

Annex I

Report of Belarus

[Original: Russian]

The basic difference between resolution 60/14 and similar previous documents of the General Assembly is its emphasis on a new stage in the development of international Chernobyl cooperation, the basic element of which is not emergency humanitarian relief, but long-term assistance in the overall recovery of the contaminated areas, which includes the re-establishment of socio-economic activities with account taken of the need to create safe living conditions.

In developing this element within the framework of cooperation with the World Bank, a loan agreement was signed on 19 April 2006 with the aim of implementing the project to rehabilitate the areas affected by the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The project includes two socially important components:

- enhancing the effective use of fuel and energy resources at facilities in the social field;
- supplying gas to individual apartment buildings in communities in the areas contaminated with radionuclides.

The provision of the loan by the World Bank to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster is a new stage in cooperation and a transition from non-repayable assistance to lending projects.

The possibility of the World Bank providing a loan for carrying out measures to upgrade the water supply in the affected areas is being studied.

The Cooperation for Rehabilitation (CORE) programme has become a unique platform for developing long-term models for international Chernobyl cooperation, including those proposed at the international conference "20 Years after Chernobyl: Strategy for Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions". Its objective is to ensure the sustainable improvement of the living conditions of the population in the affected areas.

To date, the CORE programme includes 116 projects totalling 8.3 million euros (it began in 2004 with six thematic projects). Project cooperation is being developed with the aim of overcoming the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant with such organizations of the United Nations system as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Close cooperation is continuing with the Russian Federation, particularly under the current programme of joint activities to overcome the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster within the framework of the Union State. This programme is an effective tool for combining material and information resources, scientific potential and the experience acquired by the two States in carrying out measures to ensure radiation, medical, and social protection, rehabilitate the population and establish

the prerequisites for the stable development of the territories under the conditions of the limitations linked to the effect of the radiation factor. The programme covers the period through 2010 and sets forth specific measures to develop and apply in practice the results achieved in 1998-2005 under previous joint activity programmes.

The provision of humanitarian assistance to Belarus is continuing. Accordingly, within the framework of implementing three agreements between the Government of Belarus and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the provision of non-repayable assistance to the affected regions, medical equipment and computer technology totalling 20 million yuan have been donated and approximately 30 million yuan have been provided for constructing and equipping a socially important facility.

The programmes and projects enumerated organically supplement the State programmes being implemented by Belarus, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of joint activities to minimize the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Annex II

Report of the Russian Federation

[Original: Russian]

Paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 60/14 (... the necessity of further measures to ensure the integration of the assessment by the Chernobyl Forum of the environmental, health and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident into the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network process through dissemination of the findings of the Forum ...)

Under the federal special-purpose programme "Overcoming the consequences of radiation accidents for the period up to 2010", regional research and information centres were set up in 2006 in the Kaluga, Tula and Orel regions. The basic tasks of the centres are to:

- provide government bodies, the public and economic entities with reliable information and the results of an objective situational analysis of the development of conditions in the affected areas;
- enhance the awareness of citizens who require additional information on the problems involved in living in the areas affected by the radiation accidents in order to lower the level of socio-psychological tension on the part of the population;
- provide information support for positive initiatives designed to establish normal conditions for life and economic activity.

A similar research and information centre will be established in the Bryansk region in 2007.

The Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations and the Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Republic of Belarus jointly drew up and submitted to the Union State Council of Ministers a programme of joint activities for overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster within the framework of the Union State for 2006-2010. The programme was approved under decision No. 33 of the Union State Council of Ministers of 26 September 2006. One of its aims is to instil an adequate understanding on the part of the population of the Union State concerning the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant by carrying out a general information policy. The basic work being conducted under the decision includes the implementation of projects and programmes as part of the development of the International Chernobyl Scientific Research and Information Network.

Paragraphs 11, 12, 13 and 14 (activities in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident)

The Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations, on instructions from the Government of the Russian Federation, took part in organizing the implementation of the Plan of Joint Activities of the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in connection with the Twentieth Anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, which included the following:

- commemorative events expressing condolences were held on 26 April 2006 at the Mitinsk Cemetery in Moscow, where the participants in the Chernobyl clean-up operations who died as a result of the accident response are buried;

– an international conference on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster was held in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident from 19 to 21 April 2006 in Minsk and Gomel; the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations organized the preparation of exhibition materials for it, reflecting the work to minimize the consequences of the accident in the Russian Federation;

– the international specialized exhibition "Chernobyl: the environment, the individual and health" and a scientific research seminar on the topic were held from 5 to 8 December 2006 in Moscow. More than 80 exhibitors took part in the exhibition, and Belarusian and Ukrainian organizations were represented together with Russian organizations. According to our estimate, more than 3,000 persons visited the exhibition. In all, 81 persons participated in the work of the seminar.

The following international seminars were conducted in order to carry out activities to expand international cooperation and disseminate the positive experience acquired in solving the problems of radioactive contamination and its consequences and provide reliable information on the state of the affected areas in 2006 under the federal special-purpose programme "Overcoming the consequences of radiation accidents for the period up to 2010":

– on 29 and 30 November in Chelyabinsk, a seminar was conducted on the topic "Informing the population living in the affected area of the Mayak production association about radiation risk factors"; representatives of the Russian Federation, Sweden, Germany and Kazakhstan took part in the seminar;

– from 15 to 17 November 2006 in Moscow, a seminar was held on the topic "Assessing the radiation dose of the residents of the Bryansk region by measuring the caesium-137 content in the bodies of those exposed to radiation".

The aim of the seminars was to summarize and disseminate best practices for organizing the work of informing the public and drawing up recommendations for federal, regional and local government bodies on providing effective information for work with the population exposed to the effects of radiation.

In 2007, work will continue under the programme of the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations aimed at fulfilling the Russian Federation's international obligations in overcoming the consequences of radiation disasters and incidents.

To this end, in establishing the procedures and mechanisms for effective cooperation with international participants in carrying out long-term protective measures in rural communities by introducing the ReSCA decision-making support system developed under the international IAEA-Belarus-Russian Federation-Ukraine project RER/9/074, integrated mechanisms will be set up for carrying out long-term protective measures in the rural communities in the territories of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine that were contaminated after the Chernobyl accident through the introduction of the ReSCA support system developed under the RER/9/074 international project. Optimal alternative rehabilitation measures will be developed for the Russian Federation for the 30 rural communities in the Bryansk region, where the population's radiation doses exceed 1 m3v/year; and approximately 30 specialists in using the system were trained.

Annex III

Report of Ukraine

[Original: Russian]

Pursuant to the Ukrainian Act on the national programme for overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster during the period 2006-2010, the immediate tasks facing the Ukrainian Government in this respect consist in the integrated medical and socio-psychological rehabilitation of the affected population, their social protection and the establishment of safe living conditions in areas contaminated by radiation. The socio-economic regeneration of population centres and areas exposed to radioactive contamination is a priority of national policy. The programme is also designed to strengthen and back up radiation safety barriers and protection against radiation for the population living in the above-mentioned areas and to ensure that the spread of radionuclides from the exclusion zone is curbed to the greatest extent possible.

Measures to deal with the aftermath of the disaster focus in particular on work in the exclusion zone, because that is where a large proportion of the radioactive materials from the destroyed reactor stayed, and it is the location of the Chernobyl plant and the shelter, where steps are being taken to revamp environmental safety arrangements. Thanks to the efforts made, the radio-ecological situation in the exclusion zone has remained stable in recent years. As far as radioactive waste is concerned, action is basically aimed at continuing scheduled work within the exclusion zone to deactivate, transport, process and bury this waste (in the "Vector" industrial complex), and devising a national radioactive waste management strategy with the assistance of the European Union.

Under the Shelter Implementation Plan (SIP) which is being carried out in accordance with the Framework Agreement between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Ukraine, most of the planned installations on the site of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant have gone into operation. An important stage in work to stabilize the shelter has been completed and the damaged structures of unit 4 of the power plant have been strengthened. Preparations for the construction of the New Safe Confinement are continuing.

A number of international projects are being implemented with a view to improving and modernizing radio-ecological monitoring in the exclusion zone, heightening the physical protection of nuclear materials, preventing the unauthorized transport of radioactive materials, remediating contaminated soil in the exclusion zone and drawing up standards and legislation covering radioactive waste management in Ukraine.

In keeping with the Ukrainian Act on the status and social protection of citizens who are Chernobyl disaster victims, national policy is based on the following principles: priority for victims' life and health, the Government being responsible for creating safe and non-injurious living and working conditions; holistic solutions in health-care services and social policy, use of contaminated areas taking account of developments in the field of science and environmental protection; full compensation of victims; use of economic methods to improve life, in particular, through the granting of tax breaks to victims; implementation of measures for the vocational retraining of victims and the upgrading of their skills; coordination of decision-making and action by State bodies, institutions and organizations providing social

assistance for victims; use of international experience and international cooperation with regard to health care, labour safety and radiation protection.

In keeping with the aims and goals of the National Programme to Overcome the Consequences of Chernobyl Disaster for 2006-2010 and the Ukrainian Act on the status and social protection of citizens who are Chernobyl disaster victims, victims receive annual medical check-ups and treatment at a health resort. Specialized centres, including centres for children, have been set for the screening, treatment and socio-psychological rehabilitation of victims.

With a view to providing more effective medical and social care, a State register of Chernobyl disaster victims has been created. As at 1 January 2007, the register included 2,264,574 persons who had undergone a medical examination, 2,031,668 of whom were found to be ill and constantly in need of medical assistance. In 2006, 2,526,216 Chernobyl disaster victims were being kept under medical observation by health institutions. Of these persons, 589,455 were children. There are 36 national and regional medical institutions, as well as 77 district polyclinics and hospitals available to provide medical help.

Between 2002 and 2006, the Government of Ukraine together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), carried out the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme, whose purpose it was to reduce the long-term social, economic and ecological impact of the accident and to create favourable living conditions for residents of the contaminated areas.

Five centres for the socio-psychological rehabilitation of the population and for providing information on how to deal with the consequences of the disaster have been set up with the participation of UNDP in the most affected regions. The centres' activities in terms of providing socio-psychological support, heightening the population's awareness of the environmental situation and safe residence measures in the contaminated areas have been deemed effective. New lines of action for the centres include a social mobilization and community development programme.

The most promising avenues of further cooperation with the United Nations are the provision of practical and technical assistance with the kitting out of specialized medical facilities with up-to-date equipment for treatment and diagnosis, drugs and medical material to secure an appropriate level of assistance for victims and persons requiring complicated operations or treatment for cancerous diseases; widening the network of interregional centres for the socio-psychological rehabilitation of the population and supplying the latter with information on how to cope with the aftermath of the disaster; further evaluation of the radiation exposure of participants in the clean-up operations, Chernobyl accident victims and also persons who have not been given an initial assessment; continued prophylactic screening for thyroid cancer, especially among people who were under the age of 18 at the time of the accident; measures to compensate for iodine deficiency, particularly in children; wider cooperation with the United Nations with respect to medical, environmental, youth and socio-economic questions (in keeping with the recommendations of the Chernobyl Forum).

In order to guarantee appropriate action on the above-mentioned tasks, Chernobyl's nexus of problems should be kept on the agenda of the General Assembly and Ukraine's cooperation with the programmes, funds and institutions of the United Nations system should be expanded.